



September 2008

SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Finance Division

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This newsletter is emailed to school districts, county superintendents, county treasurers, and auditors each month. The newsletter is intended to reach all district staff involved in budgeting, accounting, enrollment, special education funding, and federal programs. Please forward this newsletter to all interested parties. Got suggestions for items to include here? We'd love to hear from you!

FY2008 TFS/FY2009 Budgets Due to OPI

FY2008 Trustees Financial Summary and FY2009 Budget Reports are due to OPI by September 8, 2008.

For more information, contact Janelle Graybeal jgraybeal@mt.gov or (406) 444-3249

School Finance Administrative Rules

State Superintendent Linda McCulloch recently adopted a new rule and amended other rules relating to school finance and the new electronic filing system for pupil transportation. These rules are located in chapters 7, 10, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22 and 23 of the Administrative Rules of Montana. A copy of the rule notice is located at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/legaldivision/10-7-117pro-arm.pdf>

For more information, contact Denise Ulberg dulberg@mt.gov or (406) 444-1960

OPI Discontinues the "Ungraded" Enrollment Reporting Option

In previous years, schools have been able to report students with disabilities to the OPI as enrolled, but not assigned to a grade level. The terms used in MAEFAIRS and AIM were "ungraded elementary," "ungraded 7-8," and "ungraded high school." The OPI has found that these reporting options were used inconsistently by schools and have been a source of confusion when determining which students are required to participate in statewide testing. The OPI has removed the "ungraded" reporting option. For reporting students who have not been assigned to a grade level, school districts must consistently assign students to their age-appropriate grade level in OPI data systems (MAEFAIRS, AIM, and Special Education Child Count).

For more information, contact [Sara Loewen, AIM Unit Manager](mailto:Sara.Loewen@mt.gov), 406-444-3494

Enrollment "10-Day Rule"

A district may not include a student in the enrollment count for ANB purposes if the student has been absent, with or without excuse, 11 consecutive school days immediately preceding and including the official count dates (October 6, 2008 and February 1, 2009). Even if the student has not missed more than 10 days as of the count date, a district cannot count the student if: 1) the student has enrolled in another district; OR 2) the district has received notice verbally or in writing that the student will no longer be attending; OR 3) the student had records transferred to another school; OR 4) the student is otherwise unable to continue attendance (death, detention, etc.) (ARM 10.20.102).

For more information, contact Nica Carte ncarte@mt.gov or (406) 444-4401

MCA 20-9-707 allows the resident district of a student who attends a Montana Job Corps Program at Anaconda, Ronan, or Darby to claim ANB, if the student is enrolled in the resident district and the district has an interlocal agreement with the job corps.

For more information, contact Nica Carte ncarte@mt.gov or (406) 444-4401

**Reporting
Kindergarten
Enrollment in
MAEFAIRS**

Please follow the instructions below when reporting enrollment for kindergarten students:

Kindergarten Half Time Program

The minimum aggregate hours required for a half time kindergarten program is 360 hours of pupil instruction.

1. Enter grade as "Kindergarten" and program type as "Half"
2. Enter the total number of kindergarten students enrolled in a half time program.
3. Students enrolled for less than 360 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per year must also be reported as part time:
 - a. Click on the Part-time icon.
 - b. Choose "Kindergarten" for grade level.
 - c. Choose "Half" for program type.
 - d. Enter the number of students enrolled less than 180 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year. These students are not included for purposes of ANB.
 - e. Enter the number of students enrolled from 180 to 359 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year. These students are counted as one-quarter time enrolled for purposes of ANB.

Kindergarten Full Time Program

The minimum aggregate hours required for a full time kindergarten program is 720 hours of pupil instruction.

1. Enter grade as "Kindergarten" and program type as "Full"
2. Enter the total number of kindergarten students enrolled in a full time program.
3. Students enrolled for less than 720 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per year must also be reported as part time:
 - a. Click on the Part-time icon.
 - b. Choose "Kindergarten" for grade level.
 - c. Choose "Full" for program type.
 - d. Enter the number of students enrolled less than 180 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year. These students are not included for purposes of ANB.
 - e. Enter the number of students enrolled from 180 to 359 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year. These students are counted as one-quarter time enrolled for purposes of ANB.
 - f. Enter the number of students enrolled from 360 to 539 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year. These students are counted as one-half time enrolled for purposes of ANB.
 - g. Enter the number of students enrolled from 540 to 719 aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year. These students are counted as three-quarter time enrolled for purposes of ANB.

For more information, contact Nica Carte ncarte@mt.gov or (406) 444-4401

Approved Bus Routes

Please remind bus drivers – Buses must be driven on routes as approved by the county transportation committee. Routes must not be altered without the county transportation committee's approval. Running alternative routes without approval may result in state and county overpayments that are subject to refund. Altering routes might also expose the district to unnecessary liability risks.

For more information, contact Maxine Mougeot mmougeot@mt.gov or (406) 444-3096

New Due Dates for Transportation Forms

The due dates for several of the "TR" forms have changed:

TR-4 Individual Transportation Contract

School district: By July 1, electronically submit TR-4s to OPI via the online program and send one copy of each TR-4 to the county superintendent.

County superintendent: By October 1, electronically acknowledge receipt of TR-4s and authorize contracts for which the county transportation committee has approved increased payment due to isolation.

TR-1 Bus Routes

School district: By November 1, electronically submit TR-1s to OPI via the online program and send one copy to the county superintendent.

County superintendent: By November 10, electronically approve TR-1s submitted by district.

TR-5 and TR-6 Reimbursement Claim Forms – 1st Semester

School district: By February 15, electronically submit TR-5 and TR-6 to OPI via the online program and send one copy to the county superintendent.

County superintendent: By February 22, electronically authorize each district's reimbursement claim form (TR-5 and TR-6).

TR-5 and TR-6 Reimbursement Claim Forms – 2nd Semester

School district: By May 24, electronically submit TR-5 and TR-6 to OPI via the online program and send one copy to the county superintendent.

County superintendent: By June 1, electronically authorize each district's reimbursement claim form (TR-5 and TR-6).

For more information, contact Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@mt.gov.

FY2009 1st Semester TR-13 Bus Inspections

The Montana Highway Patrol must inspect all school buses used to transport students at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the first semester. If necessary, the buses must be re-inspected before the beginning of the semester.

Pre-printed TR-13 Bus Inspection forms are available by logging into the Pupil Transportation Data Entry program located at <http://data.opi.mt.gov/Transportation/> under Reports menu. To enter the inspection date and approval, go to the Data Entry menu and click on TR-13 Bus Inspection. Districts are encouraged to download the instructions for entering bus inspection information from the following link:

http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/PupilTransport/TR_13Instructions.pdf

For more information, contact Maxine Mougeot mmougeot@mt.gov or (406) 444-3096

Bus Driver Training Requirements - 10 Hours per Year

Standards adopted by the Board of Public Education in 2002 require a minimum of 10 hours of training for school bus drivers each year. This includes substitute drivers. Each district must design and implement a training program using the guidelines and requirements found in the 2003 Yellow School Bus Standards. See <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/pupiltransport/busstds.pdf> OPI has a variety of videos on bus driving techniques and bus safety issues that are available for district use. The video listing and various bus driver training opportunities across the state are listed at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PupilTransport/index.html#train>

For more information, contact Maxine Mougeot mmougeot@mt.gov or (406) 444-3096

FY2009 One-Time-Only (OTO) Payments

Information about the FY2009 one-time-only (OTO) payments is located at the following links:

Kindergarten Start-up:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/pdf/SchoolFinance/budget/FY09OTOPFTK.pdf>

Indian Education for All:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/pdf/SchoolFinance/budget/FY09OTO IEA.pdf>

For more information, contact Kathleen Wanner kwanner@mt.gov or (406) 444-9852

When are OPI Payments Made?

All OPI payments are posted at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/payments/index.html>

- Approved grant payments are paid on the 10th of each month.
- School Food Program payments are made by the 25th of each month.
- Direct State Aid payments are made between the 19th and the 25th, based on a set schedule.
- Guaranteed Tax Base Aid payments are made in November and May.
- Transportation Reimbursements are made in March and June.

For more information, contact Kathleen Wanner kwanner@mt.gov or (406) 444-3096

Contract Soon for FY2007-08 Audits

If you haven't already done so, please contact your auditor soon to arrange an audit of FY2007-08. School districts that spent more than \$500,000 of Federal assistance last year, including USDA commodities, must submit an "A-133" (aka "Federal") audit report for FY2007-08 to OPI by March 31, 2009.

Districts that spent less than \$500,000 of Federal assistance must have a "regular" audit and submit a report to OPI within one year of the close of the fiscal year (i.e., FY2007-08 audits are due to OPI by June 30, 2009). Very small districts with less than \$500,000 of total revenues in all funds combined must have an audit "review" every four years upon OPI request.

For more information, contact Rebecca Phillips rphillips2@mt.gov or (406) 444-0783

Handy Tools for Clerks - Excel Spreadsheets

OPI has lots of Excel spreadsheets available to help clerks perform common duties. Spreadsheets are posted on the School Finance-School Accounting website at:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Acct2.html>

Spreadsheets include:

- * Fund 15 Recap – Reconciling Cash in the Miscellaneous Programs Fund
- * Reconciling Cash to the County Treasurer
- * Student Activity Fund Recap
- * Compensated Absences Spreadsheet
- * Technology Levy Spreadsheet

For more information, contact Adam Anfinson aanfinson@mt.gov or (406) 444-4524

Useful Links

State Entitlement Payments to Schools:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/School%20Finance/Payments/>

School Accounting: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Acct2.html>

Forms and Publications: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Forms2.html>

Pupil Transportation: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PupilTransport/index.html>

Enrollment and ANB: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Enrollment2.html>

Tuition: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Tuition2.html>

Audit Information: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/SchoolFinance/Audit2.html>

School Finance Calendar: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/calendar/calendar.php?calendar=2>

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School Days Again 😊



From your friends in the
School Finance Division!